

SOWER AND SOILS

Matthew 13:1-23

This chapter has 7 parables about the Kingdom, often called 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' (v13). They describe what results from preaching and witnessing to the Gospel of Christ in the world in this present age right up to the time when Jesus returns and gather His harvest. (v40-43) Jesus speaks some of the parables to the crowd and some to the disciples (plus the explanations). F.B.Meyer says – this is one of those parables which admit a very wide application.

SOWING THE SEED v 1 – 9

This was the normal way for sowing, with all its problems, and perhaps much wastage.

If you had been asked to assess the success of this particular farmer- what would you say?

The types of soil vary - - so what may you expect for results?

It does not look good for the seed on the first three soils mentioned. One eaten up another withered the other choked. Is there a problem with the sower or the seed?

Notice what happens in the fourth type of soil – what would you say about the harvest as a whole?

What initial response is Jesus inviting his hearers to in v9?

Consider: Have there been times in your own Christian life when God has spoken to you about the need to do something and you've responded either with a hard, shallow or distracted heart?

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS v 10 – 17

The explanation does not immediately follow – Jesus explains to whom it is necessary.

The disciples soon question Jesus – and that is good for us to do that. We may come with our confusions, our searching for explanations and be ready to listen.

They ask 'why parables?' (v10)

Have you heard it said –'a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'? Do you believe that?

What does Jesus say? (v11-13) See how Jesus says this fulfils Isaiah's prophecy in Ch 6v9-10.

Do you think this unfair – does not Jesus want all to know and understand the gospel?

V15 –shows how they have closed their ears, eyes and minds. Jesus knows that sadly many simply will not and cannot understand. They have closed their minds to the truth as Isaiah said.

Jesus was ready to let people go when they were unwilling to receive his words—should we?

Look up 2 Corinthians 4 v 1-6

v16-17 (and v11) –What has been given to the disciples (and us) v11 and why is it wonderful to know these things (v16-17)? All those OT prophets would love to swap shoes with you as a Christian.

What a privilege if God has *blessed us* with open ears and eyes- this is His gift and all of grace.

SPEAKING THE WORD v 18 – 23

The crowd may have gone –but the disciples want to know more –and Jesus explains v18.

v-19-22 No appetite, no understanding, no concern, no depth and no room.

Jesus was not deceived by encouraging signs - -are we? Are we in fact –too quick sometimes to accept people as Christians regardless of what the 'soil' is like?

What does the seed represent in the parable?

What are the soils? What does each of the soils represent?

Picture each of these kinds of people in everyday life – what do they look like?

The main point is that the pattern of responses to the word is the same as the pattern of growth.

How can people in the first three types of soil develop good soil?

How can those on the good soil maintain the condition of their soil?

CONCLUSION –

James1v22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a person who looks at their face in a mirror

24 and, after looking at themselves, goes away and immediately forgets what they look like.

25 But the person who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it— will be blessed in what they do

DJ

PRAYER POINTS -

Pastors Tom & Gary, Youth Worker Matt and Women's Worker Bev as they share the Gospel.

For each of us as we are living witnesses for the gospel, that we might hear and obey.

Pray for those who come to Surrey but whose minds are still closed to the truth.